

January 9, 2009

Madam Speaker:

The Paycheck Fairness Act is about far more than the size of a paycheck. It is about our commitment to the American values of hard work and equality of opportunity. The story of America is our never-ending march toward the highest ideals of equal opportunity for all our citizens. Today, we write a new chapter in that great American story. Today, we say to women and young girls all across our land, that if you work hard and play by the rules, you will be rewarded fairly. You will reap what you sow. From our founding days, that promise has motivated parents to work hard to improve the lives of their families and the future for their children. It has inspired generations of immigrants to leave their homelands to make America their home.

Fulfilling the promise of equal opportunity for American women will lift millions of our families and children out of poverty.

That's not just progress for their families; it is real progress for the American family. And, by fairly rewarding the hard work of America's women, we make our nation more competitive in the world economy. Some will say this step forward will be inconvenient. I say that knocking down barriers to equality of opportunity has never been the convenient thing to do, but it has always been the right thing to do.

My wife and I try to teach our two young sons every day that if they will work hard, they will do well in life—that their work will be rewarded fairly.

I am supporting this bill, because I want the parents of every little girl in America to be able to teach that value, to make that promise to their daughters. It is the promise of America.